

What Can We Know About the Second Coming?

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Introduction: About every ten years there is a highly publicized event where someone has confidently predicted the coming of Christ.

A. About ten years ago while I was preaching in Bessemer, I received several mailings to the church building of a book entitled: **"88 Reasons Why The Rapture Could Be In 1988."**

1. Sadly the book received enormous attention by the press and the talk shows.
2. We should not scoff at men like but rather learn from their mistakes.
3. We just witnessed the failure of another prediction. "This web site serves as an introduction and portal to four faithful ministries which are teaching that WE CAN KNOW from the Bible alone that the date of the rapture of believers will take place on May 21, 2011 and that God will destroy this world on October 21, 2011." www.wecanknow.com
4. The Drudge report carried this headline last night: "World Ends, Film at 11:00."

B. What do you know from the Bible about the second coming?

I. Why do men try to predict the Second Coming?

A. Because people are prone to accept and follow such men. (**Acts 20:30**)

1. William Miller, J.B. Rutherford and others have boldly proclaimed they knew and had a large following.
2. Miller made the same mistake twice where people sold everything they had and gave it away because they *knew* the end was here.
3. In Rutherford's case he refused to admit that Jesus did not come back in 1914, rather he said that Jesus returned but was invisible! The modern day "Jehovah's Witnesses" came from his efforts. Recently the "Witnesses" have abandoned even more of Rutherford's predictions.
4. In 1974 there was a preacher who came to town predicting Christ would come on Sept 21, 1974. I had some friends who believed it!

B. Because a doctrinal system called "Premillennialism" has been widely accepted.

1. This approach to scripture has at its root the ideal that we can know certain end time events that tell us the second coming is imminent.
2. When someone speaks of "the rapture" or talks about the present day events in Israel as being fulfillment of Bible prophecy, they have accepted at least part of this system.
3. The term rapture is not found in the Bible. However the word can be used to describe what happens to faithful Christians when Christ returns. They will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air. (**1 Thess 4:17**)
4. The modern day theories has the world continuing to exist after the 2nd coming of Christ.

C. Because such predictions cause great excitement and greater interest in religion.

1. " One cannot deny the complacency of so many, and nothing brings about the purification of His people more than the expectation of His eminent return." - Letter from World Bible Society, June 22, 1988

2. Should we not be concerned as long as "good" comes? (**Rom 3:8**)
3. In truth these predictions give much occasion for scoffing.

II. What verses do men claim predict the Second Coming?

- A. The majority of misapplied scriptures are found in Matthew 24, where Jesus gave signs of the destruction of Jerusalem.
 1. "Did Jesus say that the generation who saw Israel return as a nation would be the same generation that saw Him return with great power and glory? (Mt 24:32; Mk 13:38; Ezk 36:8)" - Inside Page, 88 Reasons .. In 1988.
 2. The other signs improperly applied to the Second Coming are "earthquakes", "persecution", "the gospel preached to the whole world", "wars and rumors of wars", and others.
- B. How are the signs of Matthew 24 to be understood?
 1. There are at least two questions considered here. (**Mt 24:2-3**)
 2. These are signs that can be understood and Christians were expected to act upon them. (**Mt 24:32-33**)
 3. Jesus said it would be fulfilled by that generation! (**Mt 24:34**) (Note: There is no mention of "the restoration of Israel anywhere in this text!")
 4. The abomination of desolation involves armies, a temple and animal sacrifices. All of these were done away in Christ and then destroyed by Rome! (**Mt 24:15; Lk 21:20-22; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11**)
 5. If these sign are of the second coming, why flee Jerusalem at all? (**Mt 24:16-20**)
What will happen to Christians when Jesus returns? (**1 Thess 4:16-18**)
 6. Some may say that the "gospel has not been preached to the whole world" so this could not refer to an event of the past! Are you sure? (**Col 1:23**)
- C. What is the place of modern day Israel in God's plan? (**Rom 1:16-17; Gal 3:26-29**)

III. What lessons should we learn from these examples?

- A. Always interpret the difficult to understand scriptures in light of the easy to understand scriptures. (**2 Pt 3:15-16**)
 1. Mr. Whisenant and others would have been better off if they accepted **Mt 24:36!**
 2. What did he say about this verse? "These events were never restricted from our knowledge, but only the day and hour of our Lord's return for the Church, and that event was limited only to the day and hour, and not the week, month or year." - 88 Reasons Why The Rapture Could Be In 1988.
 3. What about the other plain statements in the Bible? (**1 Pt 3:10; 1 Thess 5:4; Mt 24:43; 25:13**)
 4. Almost every major religious error has its roots here.
- B. We need to be ready and stay ready for His return!
 1. Some will hear of His coming with disbelief and scoffing. (**2 Pt 3:3-4, 5-7**)
 2. Others will respond with dread. (**1 Thess 5:1-3**)
 3. Christians should respond with fond anticipation. (**2 Tim 4:8; 2 Pt 3:12**)

Conclusion: Are you ready for His return? (**1 Thess 1:7-10**)